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QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS
IN ANY PART OF THE WORLD, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO COLONIAL
AND OTHER DEPENDENT COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES

QUESTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN CYPRUS

Letter dated 27 February 1991 from the Permanent Representative of the
Republic of Cyprus to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to
the Under-Secretary-General for Human Rights

I have the honour to refer to the letter addressed to you by the Turkish Representative, dated 25 February 1991, and enclose a note with comments on the Turkish allegations together with an annex on the human rights violations by Turkey in Cyprus.

At the same time I would like to draw your attention to the unacceptable reference of the Turkish Permanent Representative to "the people of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus". This constitutes an affront against the United Nations and a contemptuous disregard of the Security Council mandatory resolutions on Cyprus which have condemned in very strong and clear terms the purported secession of part of the territory of the Republic of Cyprus and rejected the demands of Turkey about "two peoples in Cyprus", uttered in furtherance of its long-ago declared policy of partitioning Cyprus, against international law and the Constitution of the Republic.

I should be grateful if my letter and its enclosures were circulated as a document of the Commission on Human Rights under item 12(a).

(Signed): Vantias Markides
Ambassador

Comments on the Turkish allegations contained in the information note
submitted by Turkey on 25 February 1991

The Turkish allegations constitute a well-known and calculated attempt by Turkey to divert world attention from the massive, grave and systematic violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms committed by Turkey in Cyprus since her 1974 invasion and continued occupation of 37 per cent of the territory of the Republic of Cyprus, as well as before this period, in order to promote her plan to partition the Republic.

The Turkish allegations should be viewed in the light of the long-ago declared policy of Turkey for partitioning Cyprus as a means for expansion.

The following statements of Turkish officials throughout the last decades are eloquent.

In 1954 the then Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. F. Koprulu, stated that: "Cyprus is an extension of mainland Turkey" and that "it should be given back to Turkey on the basis of geographic proximity". And at the Tripartite Conference on Cyprus in August-September 1955, the then Turkish Foreign Minister Mr. Zorlu stated: "... The importance of Cyprus for Turkey is not due to only one reason. It is a necessity that arises from historic commands, geography, economy and military strategy, from the right to existence and security, which is the most sacred right of every State, in short, from the very nature of things". "Turkey must impose by all means a power policy in the Aegean ... Turkey is expanding and is no longer the Turkey of the period of the Treaty of Lausanne." This is what the then Turkish Foreign Minister, Mr. Esemel, told Cumhuriyet newspaper on 19 January 1975.

In 1980, Mr. Gunnes, the Foreign Minister of Turkey at the time of the invasion, stated: "Cyprus is as valuable as the right hand of a country which cares for its defence or its expansionist goals, if any. If we do not keep in mind this strategic importance of Cyprus, we cannot understand the peace operation of 20 July or, rather it is impossible to understand the whole Cyprus crisis ... Many countries, up to a point and because this serves their interests, like to view the Cyprus problem merely as the result of our wish to protect the Turkish community of the island. While the real problem is the security of the 45 million Turks of the homeland and of the Turks of Cyprus together with the maintenance of the equilibrium in the Middle East" (Hurriyet, 20 July 1980).

Mr. Ozal, the President of Turkey, referring to the illegal unilateral declaration of the pseudo-State in the occupied area of Cyprus stated: "Cyprus is an island that pierces Turkey in the middle like a dagger. It is extremely vital from the point of view of our security. This island must not be in enemy hands. The existence of the Turks in Northern Cyprus is a guarantee in this connection" (Milliyet, 23 July 1983).

Thus Turkey, using geopolitical arguments, serving geopolitical expediencies and with evident expansionist designs, confessed its goal to occupy Cyprus and thus the true aim of the 1974 invasion against Cyprus.

I. Allegation that "the Greek Cypriots destroyed the whole basis of the existence of the Republic of Cyprus and denied vested rights to Turkish Cypriots"

This allegation is repudiated by the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council and the General Assembly adopted since 1964, which reaffirm the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the Republic of Cyprus and call upon all Member States to refrain from any action which might infringe upon it.

In fact, efforts to destroy the whole basis of the existence of the Republic of Cyprus have been carried out by Turkey since the Republic's establishment and culminated in the 1974 Turkish invasion against Cyprus, in utter disregard and in violation of all the norms and principles of international law and in particular Article 2, Section 4, of the Charter of the United Nations which provides: "All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations."

In 1963, upon instructions from Ankara, the Turkish Cypriots withdrew from organs of the Republic in accordance with a premeditated plan to promote partition. The then Vice-President, Dr. Kutchuk, rushed to state that: "the 1960 Constitution was dead". Not only were the Turkish Cypriots forced to withdraw from Government but, on the contrary, they were strongly encouraged by the Cyprus Government to stay and continue to exercise their functions. Indicative of this is the fact that the Agenda of the Council of Ministers was sent to the Turkish Cypriot Ministers for several months after 1963. The Turkish Cypriot members of the Judiciary, despite "orders" from the Turkish Cypriot leadership, opted to stay and perform their functions. They withdrew years later when they were illegally imprisoned by the Turkish Cypriot leadership.

That Turkey's aim has always been the destruction of the Republic and the promotion of a "solution" based on geographical separation is evidenced by several reports by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the Security Council:

"The lack of movement of Turkish Cypriots outside their areas is also believed to be directed by a political purpose, namely to reinforce the claim that the two main communities of Cyprus cannot live peacefully together in the island without some sort of geographical separation" (S/5764, para. 113).

"The Turkish Cypriot leaders continue to exercise effective control over the free movement of members of their community ... It is reported that Turkish Cypriots are likely to find themselves in serious difficulty with members of their own community if they fail to confine contacts with their Greek Cypriot compatriots to a strict minimum" (para. 115 of the Secretary-General's Report of 10 June 1965).

"... The Turkish Cypriot leadership continues to discourage or to prevent members of their own community from moving beyond the limits of the enclaves ..." (para. 96 of the Secretary-General's Report of 10 June 1966).

The allegation about the oppression of the Turkish Cypriots during the period 1963-1974 is again part of the same Turkish policy of segregation and partition which was promoted and implemented by the extremist and separatist elements of the Turkish Cypriot leadership.

The Turkish Cypriots did indeed suffer during those years but their suffering was imposed upon them by the Turkish side which prevented them from exercising their basic human rights. There is irrefutable evidence to this effect.

(a) Alleged "restriction of freedom of movement"

That the Turkish side was responsible for such restriction is corroborated by the reports of the Secretary-General to the Security Council, which are quoted above, as well as by the following extracts, which also reveal the real aims behind such policy.

"The Turkish Cypriots continue rigidly to deny freedom of movement to Greek cypriots in the Turkish Cypriot sector of Nicosia and in the enclave to the north of the city" (para. 112, S/6426, 10 June 1965).

"Except in rare and special cases, the Turkish Cypriot leadership denies entry into areas under its control to all Greek Cypriots, whether government officials or private individuals. This ban appears to be enforced as a matter of political principle with little attempt at justification on practical grounds, and, with the exception of the Kyrenia Road convoy and Limmitis (para. 118), entry is usually firmly denied even where Greek Cypriots would be escorted by United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus personnel and security factors could not possibly be at stake.

"... But the Turkish Cypriot leadership does not favour the return of refugees - Turkish Cypriots - to their homes and deters them from going back to their villages on the grounds that the basic political problems must be solved ..." (paras. 109 and 139 from the Secretary-General's Report No. S/7611, 8 December 1966).

"... Whereas Turkish Cypriots may move freely throughout the Island except in a few militarily restricted areas, access to Turkish Cypriot enclaves, a number of Turkish Cypriot villages and certain roads continues to be denied to Greek Cypriots ... the Turkish Cypriots have enjoyed full freedom of movement over the whole Island whilst the Greek Cypriots are still prevented from using some of the Republic's main roads" (para. 55 from the Secretary-General's Report No. S/9233, 3 June 1969).

"In the matter of freedom of movement there has regrettably been no major change. The Government has continued to express serious concern at the lack of free access by Greek Cypriots to Turkish Cypriot-controlled areas. Besides the Turkish Cypriot 'enclaves' a number of Turkish Cypriot villages and public trunk roads remain closed to Greek Cypriots although Turkish Cypriots have been moving freely throughout the Island for nearly two years except in militarily restricted areas" (para. 54, S/9521, 3 December 1969).

"Again it is regretted that there has been no improvement on the problem of freedom of movement (S/10005, para. 85). The Government has repeatedly

expressed its disapproval of the policy of the Turkish Cypriot leadership in denying to Greek Cypriots the use of a number of major public roads. Complaints are also still being received from areas where Greek Cypriot farmers are being denied access to fields which lie in Turkish Cypriot-controlled areas, particularly in the Chatos/Lefkoniko region. The Turkish Cypriot leadership has made it clear that its position on the question of freedom of movement remains unchanged ..." (para. 57, S/10199, 20 May 1971).

The same policy of segregation in order to further the partition of the Republic of Cyprus continues to be carried out by Turkey to date. It is being pursued through the denial of the freedom of movement of the Turkish Cypriots as well as the denial of the freedom of movement of the Greek Cypriots and of the refugees to return to their homes in the occupied area, in utter disregard of the express provisions of the United Nations resolutions on Cyprus.

(b) Allegation of "Denial of postal services"

As evidenced from the above statements, Turkey's aim has been the geographical separation as a prelude to political partition. Therefore, the Government of Cyprus could not allow the establishment of an illegal postal authority which would undermine the authority of the internationally recognized Government of Cyprus (see Security Council resolution 186/1964). However, as freedom of movement was not allowed by the Turkish side, mail was sent, as it is now sent, to Turkish Cypriots through the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus.

(c) Allegation of "Economic restrictions - restrictions of the economic life of the 'north'"

This allegation is also repudiated by the reports of the Secretary-General quoted above.

It is by now clear what really lies behind the Turkish allegations: to conceal her own expansionist intentions against Cyprus.

II. Allegation about the "Exercise by the Turkish Cypriots of the right to self-determination in 1983"

The illegal State proclaimed in 1983 in the occupied area of the Republic of Cyprus was condemned by Security Council resolutions 541/1983 and 550/1984, as well as by all subsequent Security Council resolutions, which declare the pseudo-State in the occupied area as legally invalid, call for its withdrawal and upon all States not to recognize it and not to facilitate or in any way assist it.

III. Allegation about "a ruthless campaign of deceit - hence, one-sided resolutions"

The alleged "deceit" of the international community led to the adoption, *inter alia*, of 77 Security Council resolutions - 29 before and 48 after the Turkish invasion - all containing substantial provisions. They remain unimplemented by Turkey, the only country which has not been deceived by the Security Council. The resolutions of the Commission on Human Rights have the same fate.

The true situation in Cyprus since the 1974 Turkish invasion is the continued occupation of 37 per cent of the territory of the Republic of Cyprus and the massive, grave and systematic violations by Turkey of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the people of Cyprus, in breach of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the numerous United Nations resolutions on Cyprus, including those of the Commission on Human Rights and the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities.

The continuing human rights violations by Turkey in Cyprus are summarized in the Annex to this note.

IV. Allegation that since 1974 the Government of the Republic of Cyprus "is imposing economic and other restrictions to the Turkish occupied area of Cyprus"

The true situation is as follows: after the Turkish invasion against Cyprus, which resulted in the illegal seizure by Turkey of 70 per cent of the economic resources of the island, leaving 82 per cent of the population with the remaining 30 per cent of the economic resources and a huge refugee problem, the Cyprus Government had to take measures in order to protect the properties of the Greek Cypriot refugees situated in the occupied area - their livelihood, homes, assets, businesses, hotels, industries, etc. - which have been usurped and illegally exploited by the Turkish occupation forces. All the restrictions - political, economic, commercial - referred to by Turkey are a direct result of the illegal military Turkish occupation of part of the territory of the Republic of Cyprus and the non-recognition by the international community of the pseudo-State set up by Turkey illegally in the occupied area. More specifically the Security Council by its resolution 550/84 "calls upon all Member States not to facilitate or in any way assist the aforesaid secessionist entity".

As regards international assistance it has been the consistent policy of the Government of Cyprus to utilize it for the benefit of the population of Cyprus as a whole. Despite the said continued occupation of part of Cyprus, the policies that are being followed ensure that Turkish Cypriots benefit from external assistance to Cyprus. It is worth mentioning that Turkish Cypriots are supplied with free electricity from the Cyprus Government, enjoy free water supply and various other subsidies. The Turkish Cypriot community has also since 1974 received its proper share from foreign aid, through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Red Cross; it enjoys, through the Cyprus Government, United Nations technical assistance; Turkish Cypriots participate in development projects, and receive numerous services including medical services. Turkish Cypriots are given scholarships and fellowships granted to the Cyprus Government by other Governments and international organizations.

In conclusion the Commission's attention is drawn to the failure of Turkey to complain of the alleged violations to the European Commission on Human Rights of the Council of Europe, while both Cyprus and Turkey were members of the Council at the time of the said violations and therefore Turkey could have its "allegations" verified by one of the most prestigious human rights bodies. Instead it chose to make public statements and avoid the scrutiny of a judicial, non-political body.

What is more, Turkey could have co-operated with the Commission during the three applications brought by the Republic of Cyprus against Turkey for violations of human rights committed by Turkey in Cyprus and put forward its own above allegations in accordance with the appropriate procedure. It has even been suggested to Turkey not to oppose a fourth application by Cyprus to the European Human Rights Commission and repose its trust in the decision of the Commission as regards the human rights situation in Cyprus.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cyprus has on several occasions challenged Turkey to accept the compulsory jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice in order to submit any allegations there. He even invited Turkey for a joint application for an advisory opinion from the International Court. But there has been no response so far.

ANNEX

Human rights violations by Turkey

Continuing breaches

The Cyprus problem is a clear case of massive, grave and systematic violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms by Turkey, in breach of the purposes and principles of the Charter and the provisions of numerous resolutions of the United Nations, including those of the Commission on Human Rights and the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities.

The continuing violations of human rights by Turkey in Cyprus can be summarized along the following basic categories:

1. Displacement of persons

Turkey continues to refuse to allow nearly 200,000 Greek Cypriot refugees, forcibly uprooted from their ancestral homes and lands during the Turkish invasion of 1974, to return to their homes in the now occupied area. The occupation army also refuses to allow any displaced Turkish Cypriots to return to their homes in the government controlled area. Commission on Human Rights resolution 1987/50 of 11 March 1987 "Reiterated", inter alia, "its previous calls for the full restoration of all human rights to the population of Cyprus in particular to the refugees". It should also be recalled that all relevant General Assembly resolutions call for the institution of urgent measures for the voluntary return of the refugees to their homes in safety. General Assembly resolution 3212 (XXIX), which was subsequently endorsed by the Security Council as resolution 365 (1974) on 13 December 1974, thus rendered mandatory, considers that "all refugees should return to their homes in safety" and "calls upon the parties concerned to undertake urgent measures to that end".

Sixteen years have elapsed since then and Turkey arrogantly refuses to implement the relevant resolutions that would enable the refugees to return to their homes and lands. The 35,000 strong Turkish army continues to occupy 40 per cent of the Cyprus territory and forcefully prevents any movement of Greek Cypriots to the occupied areas, let alone any return to their lands.

2. Deprivation of homes and properties

In May 1985 the illegal régime in the Turkish-occupied area purported to introduce a "Constitution", in article 159 of which it expropriated all immovable property belonging to Greek Cypriots displaced by Turkey, much of this property being distributed to illegal Turkish settlers and the Turkish army. On 17 March 1989 the so-called "House of Representatives" of the illegal régime proceeded to a new illegality and enacted an amending "Law" No. 12/1989 on "Housing, Distribution of Land and Property of Equal Value". Based on this "law" definite titles are going to be distributed for properties belonging to the expelled Greek Cypriots. More recently a new amending "law" provided for the distribution of Greek Cypriot properties and title deeds to Turkish settlers who were brought illegally to the occupied part of Cyprus.

Turkey flagrantly violates the basic human rights and fundamental freedoms of the Greek Cypriots embodied in the Universal Declaration [Article 17 (1): "Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others, and (2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property"], as well as the European Convention of Human Rights and other major international Conventions in the field of human rights. The Greek Cypriots who were forcibly expelled from their homes continue to be arbitrarily deprived of their properties in the occupied areas, which are being illegally distributed by the Turkish occupation forces along with the issuing of title deeds to persons other than their legal owners, including Turkish settlers.

3. Turkish settlers

Turkey continues unabated its policy of importing Anatolian settlers from the mainland to the occupied areas. These settlers are brought in either as tourists or seasonal workers and are given the so-called citizenship of the illegal State. It is estimated that the settlers now well exceed 65,000 and according to Turkish Cypriot opposition reports and analysis of available data, they may have reached 80,000. It should be reminded in this respect that Mr. Denktash himself, in an interview in the Spanish paper El Pais on 20 June 1988, admitted that the Turkish settlers were between 45,000 to 50,000. The other tragic aspect of the demographic situation in the occupied areas is the fact that the Turkish Cypriots continue to emigrate abroad because of increasing unemployment and violations of their human rights and basic freedoms. It is estimated that since 1974 over 30,000 have left the island. The above figures show that settlers now form a major proportion of the population of the occupied area (nearly 80,000 in a population of 170,000) significant enough to play a decisive role in the political and economic activity of those areas, while at the same time serving the objectives of Turkey's settler policy which can be summarized as follows:

- (1) To distort the population balance on the island between Turkish speakers and Greek Cypriots, with a view to justifying the disproportionately large claims of the Turkish side with respect to land and political power.
- (2) To maintain a body of people in the occupied part of Cyprus that can hold the balance of political power and ensure that the Turkish Cypriot leadership is kept in line with Turkey's policies and objectives.
- (3) To present an obstacle to the solution of the Cyprus problem.
- (4) To provide additional trained reserves in Cyprus for the Turkish military forces in Cyprus (now reaching 35,000).
- (5) To change the demographic composition of the population so that Turkish speakers outnumber the Greek Cypriots. (According to the last official census of the Republic of Cyprus prior to the Turkish invasion, the Turkish Cypriots formed only 18.1 per cent of the population.)

Apart from Turkish mainland settlers Turkey has, since last year, also encouraged Bulgarian Muslims to settle in the occupied part of Cyprus. Several families arrived there and were given "citizenship" of the illegal State. Despite our strong representations for such provocative and illegal actions,

Turkey insists in its policy of gradual settlement of the occupied areas with Bulgarian Muslims and Turkish settlers in pursuance of its overall aim of altering the demographic structure of Cyprus and Turkifying the occupied areas.

By the massive importation of settlers, the Turkish Cypriots' human rights are also being systematically violated and their political decisions adulterated. Such mainland settlers have been:

- (a) Handed property from which Greek Cypriots have been ejected.
- (b) Given work permits and work at cut-price rates thereby causing Turkish Cypriot unemployment and continuing emigration.
- (c) Given "citizenship" and "voting rights".
- (d) Formed into a settlers' political party under the control of Turkey's legate in the occupied area supporting and holding in power Mr. Denktash and his illegal régime.

4. Recent threats to settle Varosha

Turkey has repeatedly threatened to settle the closed city of Varosha with people other than its inhabitants, instead of returning it to its 35,000 lawful inhabitants the Greek Cypriot refugees of Varosha, as called for in the 1979 High-Level Agreement and resolution 550 (1984) of the Security Council.

In June 1989, Mr. Denktash threatened to settle Varosha with Bulgarian Muslims and even adopted a "decision" of his so-called cabinet to that effect. Following world condemnation of such threats and the active intervention of the EEC Presidency and other countries towards the Government of Turkey, such threats did not materialize.

Last July new attempts were made by the Turkish occupation army to change the status quo of the fenced area, by allegedly handing over control to the illegal régime. Prompt action by the Government of Cyprus and a clear statement of the President of the Security Council on 19 July reiterating resolution 550 (1984) of the Security Council again averted colonization. It is heartening to note that the Secretary-General in his last report to the Security Council (S/21981) of 7 December 1990 reiterates the position expressed in previous reports that "the United Nations considers the Government of Turkey responsible for maintaining the status quo in the fenced area of Varosha".

In addition, on 28 November, in an interview he gave to Agence France-Presse, Mr. Denktash launched new threats to settle Varosha, this time offering the closed city for the settlement of 350 Palestinian students. The Government of Turkey which is considered by the United Nations responsible for the maintenance of the status quo in Varosha, instead of complying with the Security Council demands for the transfer of the area to the administration of the United Nations (resolution 559 (1984)), continues through Mr. Denktash to launch threats for the colonization of Varosha by people other than its lawful inhabitants. On the other hand, three hotels which were occupied in 1986 and settled with students have not yet been evacuated as promised at that time.

Unless there is an immediate implementation of the United Nations resolutions for the return to Varosha of its rightful owners, the danger of colonizing the city with settlers will remain real and immediate.

5. Missing persons

There has been no progress so far as the 1,619 missing persons are concerned. These persons, 993 soldiers and 626 civilians, amongst them 112 women and 26 children under the age of 16, have been missing since the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974 and as a direct consequence of it. Most of these people were arrested by the Turkish soldiers and known to be alive in the occupied area or in detention in Turkey long after the cessation of hostilities.

Despite the adoption of a number of United Nations resolutions and the establishment of a Committee on Missing Persons in 1981, the fate of the 1,619 missing persons has not yet been ascertained and accounted for because of obstacles put forward by the Turkish side and lack of any co-operation on its part. In addition, ways and means must be found to strengthen the Committee on Missing Persons and make investigation of cases more effective. Unfortunately the efforts of the Committee have not yet borne fruit and as a result not a single case before it has been elucidated to this day, primarily because of the restrictive terms of reference. It is to be hoped that the issue of missing persons in Cyprus, a purely humanitarian question, will not be linked to the overall political solution of the Cyprus problem and a satisfactory solution will be found for the families of the missing who have the right to know what happened to their loved ones.

6. Enclaved

Out of the 20,000 Greek Cypriots who were enclaved in the occupied area since 1974, only a few hundred remain now in the Karpas peninsula. This is the result of a sustained campaign of harassment, discrimination and oppression by the occupation forces which led to outright expulsion and gradual deterioration of the living conditions of the enclaved.

Following international outcry and pressure, the Turkish Cypriot side agreed in August 1975 that Greek Cypriots in the occupied area would be free to stay, and that their families could join them. The agreement (known as the Vienna III agreement) also stipulated that the enclaved be given "every help to lead a normal life, including facilities for education and for the practice of their religion", as well as medical care by doctors of their own community".

In flagrant violation of this humanitarian agreement, Mr. Denktash's régime and the Turkish occupation forces continue to apply a racist and inhuman policy against the Greek Cypriot enclaved including:

- Denial of access to medical doctors and educational facilities.
- No Greek Cypriot doctors were allowed to be settled in the area or visit the enclaved on a regular basis.
- No high schools were allowed to operate, resulting in further expulsions and separation of families, the children being forced to pursue their studies in the government-controlled area.

- The two Greek Cypriot primary schools in the Karpas operate under primitive conditions, while censorship of basic textbooks and undue delays in deliveries of books and other educational material further hampers the education of enclaved children.
- The enclaved are restricted to their villages and immediate surroundings.
- They are subject to constant harassment and a number of them fall victims to violent actions.
- The United Nations Peace-Keeping Force which under the agreement should have "free access to Greek Cypriot habitations in the occupied area" has been severely restricted by the régime to perform its responsibilities. The tragedy of the enclaved is part of the wider tragedy of Cyprus. It is a clear case of massive violation of basic human rights and racial discrimination against this group of people in the occupied area, whose only fault is their ethnic origin, their language and religion.

7. Destruction of cultural heritage

The occupying forces continue to plunder and systematically destroy the Cypriot cultural heritage in the occupied parts of the island. Religious property is a particular target in an attempt to destroy the cultural identity of the occupied area. Greek Orthodox churches continue to be converted into mosques, vandalized or turned into cultural centres, clubs, etc. Mosaics and even frescoes are being removed, as well as antiquities smuggled, finding their way via Turkish hands to international dealers. The recent hearing in June 1989 at the Indiana Federal District Court about the four priceless Byzantine mosaics stolen from the Church of Panayia Kanakaria in the Turkish occupied village of Lythrangomi and Judge James Noland's decision sent a clear message to those plundering the cultural heritage of Cyprus:

"The mosaics are unique. The paramount significance of their existence is a part of the religious, artistic and cultural heritage of the Church and Government of Cyprus and as part of the national unity of the Republic of Cyprus."

Despite such a decision the occupying régime continues its systematic destruction of the cultural heritage of Cyprus. Recently they demolished one of the most important Ancient Monuments of Famagusta District, the Church of the Monastery of Panayia Avgasida, near Aloa village. The church was built as a domehall church in the fourteenth century. Later, in the fifteenth century, two arches of late Gothic form were attached and a chapel. The dome of the church and the soffits of the arches were decorated with wall paintings. An eighteenth century quilted wood-carved iconostasis was standing inside the church. It is more than probable that the Turks have removed the paintings and the iconostasis and then demolished the church. Turkey's destruction of Cyprus' cultural heritage is a challenge to civilization itself because it leads to the impoverishment of the cultural heritage of mankind as a whole.
